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NJMC Commits to Meeting the Goals of the Kyoto Protocol

Agency Will Encourage District Municipalities to Join Fight Against Global Warming

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission today announced it will implement policies and programs to advance the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as encourage the 14 Meadowlands municipalities to endorse the treaty.

“By supporting the Kyoto Protocol, we are holding ourselves to an international standard of environmental protection,” said NJMC Chair Susan Bass Levin, also the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner. “Through our commitment to renewable energy, the examination of our air and water quality, and the establishment of green building standards, we are offering solutions. By following this treaty, we are pledging to get results.”

The NJMC has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the Meadowlands District by 7 percent below levels recorded in 1990 by the year 2012. The agency aims to reduce these gasses through a number of initiatives already under way, which include adopting land use policies that will reduce sprawl and encourage green building, promoting alternate means of transportation including car sharing and public transportation, preserving open space and wetlands, establishing a renewable energy district, and converting landfill gas into energy.

The Kyoto Protocol was ratified by 141 nations on February 16, 2005. The treaty seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012. While the United States government has not signed the treaty, the nation’s requirement would be to reduce these emissions by 7 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012. More than 250 municipalities in the U.S. have given their own endorsement of the Kyoto Protocol, including Kearny within the Meadowlands District.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, carbon dioxide has increased by 19.6 percent from 1990 to 2004. Perfluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride are greenhouse gasses commonly found in industrial cleaning solutions, and their presence in the atmosphere has increased by 57.5 percent over the same time period. In total, greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 16 percent since 1990.

Preliminary results of a three-year air quality study were also announced during today's meeting, which cited mobile sources as a major contributor of pollutants. In addition, the NJMC Board of Commissioners announced it will purchase five carbon dioxide sensors to monitor the amount of this gas in the Meadowlands' atmosphere. The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute, the scientific arm of the NJMC, will monitor the sensors.

"Supporting the Kyoto Protocol is a logical step for this agency, having recently positioned ourselves as pioneers in sustainable development and clean energy," said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. "The negative impacts daily life has on the environment are inescapable, but we must continue our strides to make sure the impact each one of us leaves on the planet is minimal."

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